The Musket

LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1969

Speak Out
The Speak Out Art Showcase allows students to reflect on political and social events through an artistic outlet.
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Memories with Lasa
Students reflect on their interactions with Ms. Lasa in honor of her retirement.
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Volume LVIV Issue IV—February 2017

Principal Laura Lasa announces retirement after 36 years at LHS

Sarah Park
A&E Editor
Sanjana Puri
Online Content Editor

Principal Laura Lasa has announced that she will be retiring after the 2016-2017 school year.

Lasa is an alumna of Lexington High School and was a member of the class of 1977. She started her career at LHS in 1981, first as a PE teacher and then as a dean, coach, associate principal and finally principal.

For teachers, Lasa, who has been here for 36 years, has remained a constant.

"She's been here longer than I have, and I've been here 23 years!" Kevin Kelly, the math department head, said. "She will be greatly missed by many."

As the math department head, Kelly has collaborated frequently with Lasa.

"She has such a long history with our school that she understands the culture and fabric of our school in a way that only comes from being connected to it for so long," he said. "She brings wisdom and heart to the school every day and to every decision she makes."

Lasa's importance is felt by the entire LHS community.

"[Lasa] is a wonderful soundboard for teachers and students alike, and gives great advice, listens, is reflective and most importantly, she doesn't judge," Renee Bryant, an American Sign Language teacher, said. "She's a tireless advocate of those at the school who may be struggling,"

When asked about what Lasa believes is most unique about the LHS community, she said, "every student that walks through the door of this high school understands the value of education and values learning. I am really proud of being a part of this school where the faculty feels valued and respected for what they do and students feel valued and respected for what they do."

Lasa has a variety of memories that will remain with her into her retirement.

"The thing that stands out for me the most is the number of times a student would come to me with something they were wrestling with ... and their openness in sharing and trusting me to talk with them," Lasa said.

As moderator of the Student Faculty Senate, Allen Xu, a senior, often met with Lasa to share student opinions through various bills.

Xu recalled a time when Lasa's kindness surprised him during a meeting. "I was really embarrassed, because I gave her the wrong bill. I messed up. She said, 'Oh my God, Allen, you're human, high five.' I think, wow, this person's amazing," Xu said.

Ashli Parr, a junior who has worked closely with Lasa to promote Black Lives Matter Awareness this year, shares these sentiments.

"She takes you in as one of her own, like her own child. Even though she's the principal, you can have a close relationship with her," Parr said. "She's really nice and I do love her. I'm just really happy that I had her as a principal."

For closing remarks, Lasa said, "It's been an honor. It's been a privilege. I can't think of anything better than to come in and work with teenagers everyday. Thank you to the faculty. They do a wonderful job."

Lexington High School alumnus receives the Rhodes Scholarship

Eunice Kim
Maria Santillana Linares
Staff Writers

Josh Pickar, a Lexington native and member of the Lexington High School class of 2012, is set to receive a Rhodes Scholarship this year. Pickar, one of the 32 recipients, attended LHS before going to George Washington University to study international affairs and then to the University of Chicago's Law School.

Pickar graduated early from LHS in January of 2012. Throughout his high school career, he was passionate about languages, taking both AP French and Spanish, learning Arabic through the Harvard extension program and Italian from a private tutor.

His language immersion went beyond the classroom setting. Pickar participated in the French Exchange, describing it as one of his favorite memories from LHS.

"It was always clear that Josh was going to do wonderful things with his languages. I was incredibly proud of him. When I heard the announcement, I wasn't very surprised," Rina Farber-Mazor, Pickar's French teacher, said.

Pickar applied to the Rhodes Scholarship primarily because he wanted to study at Oxford in England.

"I thought that, by studying abroad in the UK at Oxford, I would still have the intense intellectual experience of graduate school that I wanted, while being able to travel throughout Europe," Pickar wrote in an email.

He also welcomed the prospect of discussing international affairs with other Rhodes Scholarship winners from all over the world. When he was studying law as a junior at University of Chicago's Law School, Pickar had the chance to participate in the rigorous Rhodes Scholarship selection.

This process spanned over a year and required eight recommendations, a personal statement, endorsement by the school and a final interview.

The news of Pickar's acceptance spread quickly amongst LHS faculty. Many teachers found out by either reading the newspaper, or hearing from Pickar himself when he came back to visit old teachers.

"Josh was a good student. He participated a lot and was comfortable in answering anything asked. He really stood out," Shane Wilson, Pickar's American history teacher, said.

Despite his many college career achievements, Pickar said that his high school education at LHS helped to prepare him for life after high school.

"I found LHS to be unbelievably challenging — much more so than undergrad ... Ultimately, LHS was a very intense experience, but I think it prepared me very well for everything I have done since," Pickar wrote.

Photo courtesy of University of Chicago
Josh Pickar, a member of the Lexington High School class of 2012, is a recipient of Rhodes Scholarship.

When Pickar came back to LHS earlier this year to visit his old teachers, Wilson invited him to talk about his experience at LHS to his Modern Conflict class. Pickar described his experience going through the Rhodes Scholarship application process, but also about his time at LHS.

"He talked about how he took Level 1 American History. I think that a lot of students were taken aback by this when they really shouldn't have been," Wilson said.

"While at LHS, I decided I was only going to take the upper level (honors/AP) classes in the subjects I was interested in, because I did not want to overburden myself studying for AP chemistry when I knew I did not want to be a chemist. I never took AP science, math, English or history — only AP languages (and a smattering of random honors classes)," Pickar wrote.

Editorial

The inauguration viewing provided a potential learning experience while also upholding the right to protest

A strange energy filled the Lexington High School auditorium Jan. 20. Students chattered excitedly as they filed into the auditorium, while members of the administration and U.S. history teachers looked on from the stage.

The varied political views of the LHS student body was apparent by the clusters of red hats, hesitant viewers and walk-outs. Nonetheless, U.S. history teacher Shane Wilson and Principal Laura Lasa established the importance of viewing the historical ceremony with respect for all viewers as well as the right of the student body to silently protest the event.

Lasa told the student body before the inauguration speech, "those of you who want to hear the remainder of this as part of your classroom lesson have the right to do so and have that done without any disturbance to your learning environment … But we also hear there are students here sitting in the auditorium who wish to exercise their right to freedom of assembly with a silent protest and not be present as the new president is sworn into office … We have to hold both of those principles and rights at the same time."

In this way, students were free to file out of the auditorium throughout President Trump's speech without pressure or conflict from the rest of the student body or the administration. Additionally, those who were in support of Trump's campaign were able to cheer and listen on.

However, since the school only allotted an hour to view and process the event, the viewing felt a little rushed and, despite efforts to make the auditorium a supportive environment, some students still found the setup intimidating.

Yooni Park, a junior, said, "I thought it was really nice how the principal let people leave in the middle without consequence. [But] I feel like watching it in the auditorium all together wasn't a good idea. I think that watching with my history teacher in a smaller group would have been more helpful."

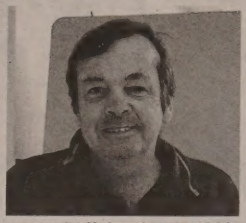
Furthermore, the short time period put the responsibility of discussing the event in the hands of history teachers. There was no guarantee that the inauguration would be discussed, particularly in classes with a significant amount of material to cover.

Worrying about an academic assignment did not help; the worksheet made it more difficult for some to solely enjoy the historic event they were observing.

Ultimately, in an inauguration as divisive as that of Donald J. Trump, the school was considerably successful at providing a comfortable and academic environment for students to watch.

Unsigned editorials reflect the opinion of the majority of the editorial board.

Hartery reflects on 41 years working in LPS



Staff photo by Iris Tsirkin

■ Talia Blatt
Emily Chen
Staff Writers

Paul Hartery bustles about the Commons and the library, cleaning from the first through the last bell. Chris Bouchard, the head custodian, uses the nickname Mr. LHS because Hartery has worked in the Lexington Public Schools system for 41 years now, and at Lexington High School for 15.

Hartery has emptied countless trash barrels, cleaned innumerable rooms and spot-mopped the mud-and-snow-tracked floors of the school. It is thanks to the work of Hartery and his coworkers that students have the privilege of tidy classrooms, facilities and cafeterias.

Besides the regular school day, Hartery also works to help many of the extracurricular functions at LHS after school and during the weekends. No matter the circumstances in which Hartery is working, he is a kind figure at LHS.

Hartery was a huge help in ensuring that LexHack, an all day hackathon at LHS, ran smoothly.

"We had a shortage of power cables on the day of the event. He brought us a ton so we could provide power to all the students … He helped us assemble and disassemble the audio equipment we used for ceremonies. He made sure we weren't violating school code with our placement of tables," Luke West, a senior, said. "He helped us move the tables out of the field house after the event, and retract the bleachers. He was a really nice dude."

Hartery works his best as a custodian, but even he can't keep up with all the cleaning required to run LHS.

"When we go outside, it gets discouraging, because a lot of the kids will just leave their lunch trays and cups and everything else all over the campus, outside … You know, we keep up with them the best that we can, but we can't always take care of all of it," he said.

Although Hartery's life is centered on his work as a custodian, he still tries to find room in his schedule to spend time with Robby, his son, and Marie, his daughter. While it is difficult to get family time considering all of their busy schedules, they manage to fit it in.

"This year I told them, we're gonna go into Boston. We're gonna go to the Prudential Center, and go to the top, and you can look all around," Hartery said.

Hartery's daughter Marie works as an occupational therapist at a rehabilitation center. She and Hartery enjoy spending time together — that is, when she isn't too occupied with her dog, Foster.

"So one day I said to her, who do you like better? Me, or Foster? And she says Foster," Hartery said, laughing softly. "She loves that dog. And then she started laughing. So she's a good kid."

As Hartery reflects on his life, he focuses on the positive. As soon as high school ended, Hartery took on his custodian job. While he sometimes thinks about opportunities he missed if he had gone to college, Hartery recalls that his job is a good one, if not undervalued.

Hartery especially appreciates the community around LHS. "I like the kids, and the staff. Everyone's pretty pleasant around here," he said.

His appreciation of the community is reciprocated.

"It's more just general kindness, and I think that's a lot harder to define than just in a few moments, having [Hartery] always be that way," Julian Berliner, a senior, said.

The 2:25 bell signals the end of a long day. Hartery enjoys going home then. He spends his free time after work taking walks, reading and watching sports. Hartery especially likes hockey.

"It's really fast. Everything is split-second. You make the play, or you don't make the play," Hartery said.

When he was younger, Hartery enjoyed playing such sports, like football and hockey. While it is more difficult for him to play now, he still likes to watch sports a little, but not too much, or else Hartery feels he is not doing anything. After all, he's a man on the move.

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Correspondence to The Musket c/o Lexington High School, 251 Waltham St., Lexington, MA 02421 or by email to musketnews@gmail.com. Short, tasteful responses are welcome.

Memories of Principal Lasa

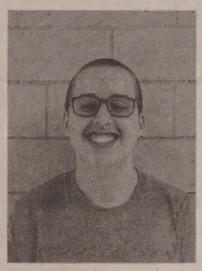
"She's really supportive and understanding and helps you out whenever you need it and makes sure that your high school years are very comfortable."
— Merlin Joyce, junior

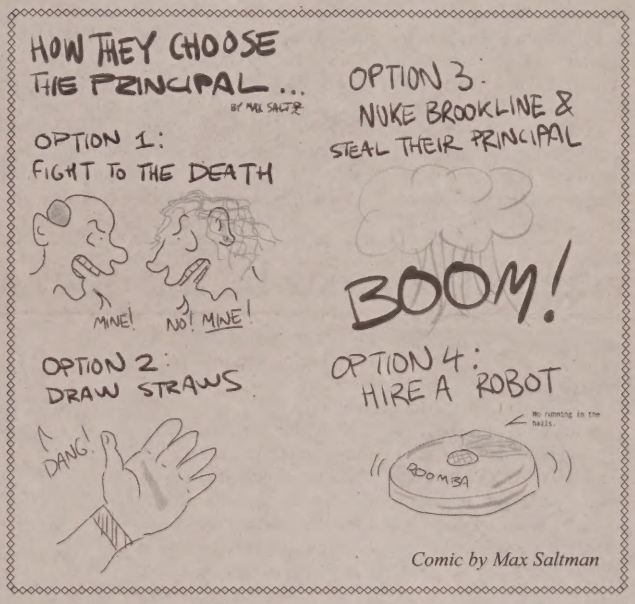
"Ms. Lasa started working as principal during my class' freshman year. I remember her stating that we were both going to learn about LHS together, that she'd be there to support and get to know our class over our four years and hoped we would do the same for her. She held true to this promise, making a large effort to get to know as many students as she could, always there to provide a smile and a friendly face in the hall."
— Erica Cagliero, Class of 2016

"At the end of my sophomore year, I went to Ms. Lasa with the idea to start a service project to raise awareness and money for hunger. Initially, I wasn't sure if it was a good idea, or that it would be successful, but Ms. Lasa liked it. A year later, the project, called Power of Change, had reached multiple communities including Lexington, and raised a total of $10,000 in cash and in-kind donations. Now, my project is continuing to expand into even more schools. But, it all started with Ms. Lasa believing in me and my project. Now, this year, I've been working closely with her through Senate. During our meetings, her passion for LHS, the students, and the community really shows ... Ms. Lasa has been an inspiring mentor, but more importantly, a great friend."
— Christi Lee, senior

"I really appreciate the level of concern she has for the well-being of her students, whether it be physically, academically, socially or politically. She will be missed!"
— Irina Costache, junior

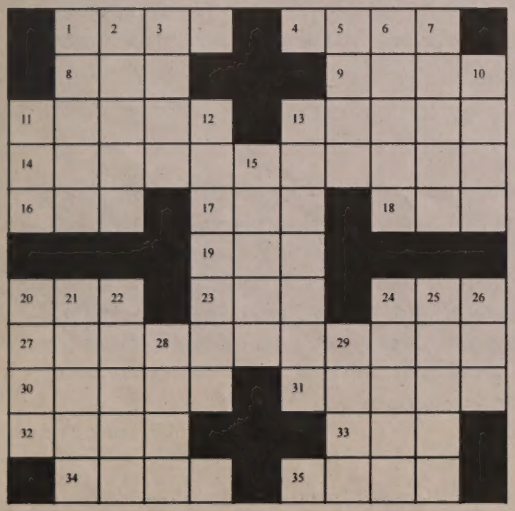
"Me and Ms. Lasa were partners on Challenge Day and I got to hear all about where she saw herself after her retirement. She said she wanted to learn to play multiple instruments and take cooking classes. I'm so sad that I have to see her leave, but I'm so happy that she will get to take that next step in life, and I hope she gets really good at playing those instruments."
— Matt Cole, junior





Comic by Max Saltman

Election Vexation



Across

1. Freddie Mercury didn't mean to make her cry
4. Couch
8. *Mr. Blue Sky* grp.
9. Bump, collide
11. Not true of 2-Down
13. Creepy, strange
14. 2017 inauguree
16. Only
17. France's NASA equivalent
18. Became acquainted with
19. The following day, abbr
20. Standard texting format
23. Charged particle
24. Vat
27. 14-Across often appeals to this sentiment
30. Decorate, beautify
31. He speaks for the trees
32. Classical language of Buddhism
33. Section of a trip
34. Southwest US landform

Down

1. Honeydew, e.g.
2. Not true of 11-Across
3. ____ *Lisa*
5. Waiter, in Wiesbaden
6. Public discussion
7. *Sword Art Online* genre
10. Retained
11. *Much* ___ *About Nothing*
12. Pure bliss
13. Neverending
15. *Good Will Hunting* star Matt
20. Brief wintry period, with "cold"
21. Wax museum ____ Tussauds
22. Burgle
24. They are often slashed
25. Method of application
26. Stunt cycling
28. Greek rainbow goddess
29. Bugs' girlfriend

Graphic by Eli Haber

For answers, visit lexmusket.com.

Athletic Director Martin seeks growth over success for Lexington High School

Staff photo by Cathryn Barbour

Athletic Director Naomi Martin works at her office, where she helps organize LHS sports teams, balance the budget and arrange the logistics of games.

Allie Antonevich
Isha Jha
Staff Writers

Spotted at nearly every Lexington High School sporting event, Athletic Director Naomi Martin is always sending words of encouragement from the sidelines that never fail to bolster the confidence of student athletes. In addition to her time on the fields, she also devotes hours in her office to scheduling transportation, arranging for game officials, balancing the athletic budget and working with coaches and student athletes.

"It's a different thing every day," Martin said.

Before becoming an athletic director, Martin received her degree in counseling and became a school counselor. While counseling, she also used her passion for athletics and connecting with student athletes to coach at both the high school and collegiate level.

Yet as time went on, Martin reexamined her career path.

"I was at a crossroads where my kids were getting older and I needed to go back to work," Martin said. "I really wanted to be a part of athletics. Really looking into athletic administration was the next step."

Martin took the athletic director position at Ashland High School in 2005, but moved on to serve as LHS's athletic director after two years.

"The size [of LHS] was a big challenge," Martin said. "But I love interacting with students and getting to know [them] ... It's 560 kids to know every season."

"I hope they know that I support them and that I'm probably their biggest fan."
—Naomi Martin

The high school's 2016 fall season brought in a lot of wins for the school. Accomplishments included the boys soccer team winning the state championship, girls cross country becoming Division 1 and all-state champions and both football and boys cross country claiming the Middlesex League championship.

"I hope they know that I support them and that I'm probably their biggest fan. I'm probably the toughest on them as well," Martin said about her job at the high school.

Martin spoke of wanting to see positive growth from the beginning to the end of each season. She noted that successful growth is not measured by wins or losses, but rather by a close-knit community built between coaching staff and teammates at the high school.

"She always greeted us with a what's up kiddo and seemed genuinely interested and invested in the team ... she would always have a word with us as a team and tell us to keep the standard that we had on the field off the field and be respectful winners," Alfred Joseph, the senior soccer team captain, said. "When the athletic director comes to so many games [and] seems just as exhilarated as us over playoff wins, it helps us succeed." Some may attribute Lexington's success on the field to the athletic director, but Martin does not credit herself for the successful fall season.

"I didn't put you in a place of success, I didn't run your practices ... I didn't hold the key to the successes and failures of the teams," she said.

Instead, Martin focuses on her ability to lead the school in terms of growth. "I don't know if there are any direct correlations between me working at Lexington High School and our successes, but if there's something that I do that helps with the growth of teams over the course of the season ... then I think we're doing a good job."

High school may be the optimum time to specialize in a sport

Alexandria Snyders Dykeman
Brandon Wu
Staff Writers

Lexington High School offers a wide variety of athletic teams, all of which have huge student participation. Unsurprisingly, many of the high school's athletes have started playing sports from a young age.

Naomi Martin, Lexington's athletic director, noted that Lexington "offers a lot of sports for young kids." She added that "between second and sixth grade a lot of kids across town [are] playing a lot of different sports."

Specialization, interest and commitment all contribute to a player's decision to pursue a single sport from an early age.

"Starting young is a mixed bag," Steven Solly, a gym teacher and basketball coach at LHS, said. "I think at a young age there are huge benefits to playing multiple sports."

Solly said certain sports require similar skills, giving children that play multiple sports growing up an upper hand. "I think what I would call specialization too early could negatively impact the athlete," Solly said. "If you just focus on one [sport] too early I think you may be neglecting other categories," Solly said.

If an individual specializes in a sport at a young age, they also run the risk of losing interest and commitment over time. "Young athletes doing the same thing early are more likely to burn themselves out ... because [the sport they play] is not fun anymore," Solly said. "It becomes a chore."

However, according to Solly, there is a right time to specialize in a sport: high school.

"[The best time to specialize is] once you are in high school and you legitimately have a chance at maybe talking about earning a scholarship. If there is some financial gain or benefit, then it may makes sense to just focus on that one sport," Solly said.

However, if an athlete is playing sports for fun or exercise, specialization in one sport may not be the best fit, even in high school.

"Research is telling us that to be balanced and to be healthy, being a multi-sport athlete is probably the best thing for kids," Martin said. "Our coaches here at the high school model that."

"I think that starting basketball at a young age has really shaped who I've become. I can remember a specific instance during my freshman year when I hit what my coach calls "the wall." Learning to get past that physical and emotional difficulty has taught me how to persevere and be resilient. Basketball in general has taught me the importance of hard work and how rewarding it is. It's why I love the game so much."

— Joanna Samsel, junior

"It is true that starting early gives you an upper-hand in becoming more skilled since you get more time for improvement. However, I believe that it's not crucial to start early in sports since the improvements depend on your passion for the sport and motivation to get better."

— Jason Choi, junior

"I think it is a positive thing to have athletes start young as long as it is not forced upon them. When I was little, I would watch soccer with my dad, that is how I fell in love with the game. He never forced me to play or watch, it was completely my choice. I started playing soccer when I was 6, and haven't looked back since then. Starting young really helped me develop as a soccer player, because I would play with older kids, forcing me to become a smarter and better player."

— Vitto Luzio, junior

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